

[In Lieu of Something Better]

IN LIEU OF SOMETHING BETTER

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it is so near Christmas and everybody, even depression victims, are in too great a rush to give me an interview. So, as Georgia Writers' work, like the show must go on, I'll just tell my own story for want of a better one. I certainly belong in the list of hard luck folks, yet I have the best there is in life - the best mother in the world, health, a cozy little bit of a

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home even if it isn't quite paid for, a circle of loyal friends, with always the best Friend who seems much nearer at Christmas time when all heaven and earth join in celebrating His birthday.

To begin at the beginning, I was born, which, according to some who came into the world before the birth certificate law, is about the hardest fact of all to prove. But I have my own mother's word for it, that I was really born on the stroke of midnight in the middle of a very hot summer. She said I started out in life with an indefinite birthday and a lusty yell.

My father was the eldest of three children and was the only son. When he was 8 years old his father died of tuberculosis; four years later his mother passed away with the same disease. In those days it was believed that tuberculosis was inherited, and everyone who was at all interested in the "Howard orphans" made it their business to warn the poor little things that they were doomed, that every cough was a sure 2 symptom of the terrible white plague. They grew to be of age somehow, surprised that they had escaped that far, but with the deep-rooted conviction that they were living on borrowed time; that in a few short years they would succumb to their inherited lung trouble. Although not one of them died of the trouble their whole lives were shadowed by its fear.

On her deathbed my grandmother had a lifelong friend called in. He was a prominent man in the community, known for his kindness and goodness, and she asked him to take her children, and their property and raise the little ones as though they were his, providing for them out of their property, and giving each of them a good education.

Everything that could be sold was turned into money, even to my father's pony that his father had given him went on the block while he cried, begging through his sobs, to be allowed to keep it. Only quilts made by their mother, handmade coverlets and spreads, one each, were given the children of all the handsome old furnishings of the home. The estate, all told, amounted to up in the thousands, a big estate in those days. The guardian took the children into his home, reared them and managed their property. It was so well

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managed (?) that when my father was of age there was only several hundred dollars and not one thing extra had been spent for him, not even a college education as his mother had requested. He refused his share saying he would wait until his sisters 3 were of age and then each would receive the remnant of their inheritance. This they did, but where the money went was never known for there was no one to investigate and the standing of the guardian in the county was so high no one would question his actions. To his dying day my father had the tenderest feeling for orphans and gave all he could afford to the support or orphanages.

Despite his bitter experience when growing up, Father was one of the most trusting persons I have ever known. And I would be much better off today, and maybe not so great a depression victim if I had not inherited that trait. But I am thankful that I still have faith in my fellowman, and have no fear of tuberculosis, although I have received hard raps financially from some, and have been warned all my life by old friends of the family, against taking cold, "for you must remember" they said, "that both of your grandparents died with tuberculosis, and that is the way it started - with colds."

After the death of my grandfather Howard, when I was a mere baby, we moved to the old house in Wilkes county. Here I was the center of attraction for my parents, my grandmother, two bachelor uncles and a young lady aunt. The mystery to me is, how in the world I ever lived through childhood with such close attention! I was my grandmother's shadow after we moved into her home.

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She told me all the wonderful stories of her life when she was young, all about plantation life before the war, and during the war. About "Old Abe Lincoln", the "damn Yankees" and all the hardships our family endured during those trying days. Early in my life the family found they had a little rebel on their hands, and no one as yet had succeeded in changing me along that line. I love the old South with all of its charm and tradition, romance and

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beauty, and if I could have been consulted about living, I would have chosen to live my whole life just prior to the War Between the States in the very heyday of Dixie.

Some day I hope to write some of the things my grandmother told me as we used to sit on the long front porch of the old home, she with her quilt making, and me sitting in a little chair at her feet begging for more stories. She almost lived on the porch and could tell time by the sun. The house fronted East and in the morning she told time by the rows of nails in the old-fashioned plank floor. When the sun got to one row of nails it was time to go in and see about dinner; in the afternoons the sun was in the walk, a long walk it was to a gate that was never fastened. The boxwoods on the walk were the clock numerals, it was time to feed the chickens when the sun was at a certain boxwood; the rural mail carrier was due when it stood at another one, and so on. I have never known any other person that could tell time so accurately without a clock. Not that there were no timepieces in our family, there were plenty of them, but my grandmother was such a busy person she did not like to have to get up from her sewing on quilts long enough to go inside the house to see the clocks so she studied the sun's progress close enough to tell time by it.

We were, I suppose, what was known as the middle class of that day, although in our community our family was looked up to by the neighbors.

We lived in a historic old house, one of the oldest in this section of the state. My grandfather an eccentric, spoiled, youngest child of a large adoring and wealthy family, got cross when he started an addition to the house and never finished it, and, strange to tell, that portion of the house remains unfinished to this day, although all of his large family was born and reared there. It is a delightful old place, sitting back in a large grove of magnificent oaks. I played in the big front yard in the shade of the most beautiful white oaks I have ever seen, and allowed my imagination full rein. I had a whole town laid out there, streets, houses, and everything my over-active fancy could think of except a cemetery. When I suddenly realized that every town that was any town at all had a cemetery, I set about having one in my town in a hurry.

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How, did not long remain a problem; I got a big basin of water, and in a moment it was a lovely lake with boats made of large leaves, sailing on its mirrored surface. In the boats were passengers, men, women, and children created with straws of various lengths all dressed with flower petals.

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All went well for a little while, then there was a terrific collision, two boats went down carrying every passenger to the bottom. Lo, when the sad task at finding the dead and interring them was over, there was an up-to-the-minute cemetery, a credit to any town!

My father taught school and when I was seven years old I started to/ his school. I was so tiny at six that it was decided to let me grow a little more before I started on the long hard task of getting educated. Among my very sweetest memories are the early days in school when my father was the teacher. We had to go two miles and rode most of the time, but in nice weather we walked through a beautiful wood and in the spring he would stop and we would get wild flowers and heart leaves on our way. I feel sorry for the children of today who are picked up at their doors and whizzed along to school; they miss so much by not having to walk a little way through the woods where all nature is smiling and restful both to mind and body.

Those perfect days changed, however, My father's health failed and he decided to move to Washington, 10 miles away. He accepted a position as bookkeeper in one of the big mercantile places here and in February we moved so that he could take over his duties on March 1st. He was taken with Lagrippe soon after moving, and was never well again. He died early in July. During his illness and at his death all the family savings had to be used.

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My mother's family begged her to move back to the old home in the country in which she had an undivided interest. She would not do this preferring to make our way and keep me in school here. She started sewing the fall after my father's death and her work pleased

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her few customers so much that it was not long before she had more work than she could do. She kept busy day and night. Many nights I have waked up past midnight and there she was sewing, unaware that I was awake. I have seen her dry her eyes, grieving for my father who died so young, just 44. She was 12 years younger than he was.

I was doing well in school after my father's death when I was taken sick following a mild attack of German measles. For three years the family physician gave Mother no hope of my recovery. But finally I won the fight against disease and very gradually got back to fairly good health. In the meantime my school work had to go undone. This distressed us all, but the wise old physician said that my health was worth more than any education and he was sure I had ambition enough to study at home and learn for myself. This I did when I was able. My mother was not able to have a private teacher for me and much too busy to teach me herself. I soon found myself almost living in our city library where I had the best of books of every kind, and I studied night and day.

When I was in my late teens a former Washington woman came home after having taught for years in a business college.

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Her family prevailed upon her to teach here. This she did and I enrolled at once. In class one day she said that the course was a hard one and that it took high school graduates to complete it. After I finished I told her I was not a high school graduate and she was amazed. Later I taught shorthand and typing and my pupils have been most successful in the business world.

After finishing my business course on the 31st of August I went to work on the 2nd of September in the office of a young attorney whose practice was not large enough to warrant a secretary's services, but his father who was very wealthy had died and the estate had to be settled.

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This made it necessary for someone to be in the office constantly. I worked for four months here, the attorney paid as \$30.00 and a cotton buyer who had desk space with him paid me \$20.00 for writing cotton checks for him. Fifty dollars a month and all of it mine! After the fall was over there was no more work for me for sometime, only odd jobs occasionally. All of those precious dollars saved had to be used until finally I landed another job. This time I received \$50.00 per month and all went well for a long time. Then the honorable attorney felt he could no longer afford such a luxury as a stenographer (and he really couldn't judging from the small number of cases he had and the way his wife spent money), so I was called in his private office and was told the story I dreaded so to hear: "I have decided that I must do my own work since business is off so much. I would 9 like to keep you on but this will be the last month I can possibly afford it." So there I was again out of work. For several mouths I worried as I saw my second savings account dwindle lower and lower and no prospect of a job.

Help finally came through the close friendship of an elderly woman who almost adopted me. She kept me with her for a large portion of the time and took me on many pleasure and research trips. In this way I learned much of the history and tradition of our town and county and to greatly appreciate our old records. I had a great desire to work among the old records in the courthouse, but how to land a job there I did not know. But one day I had an inspiration to apply to the Clerk or Court for a place in his office. Not waiting to go downtown to see him, I slipped down to the telephone when no one was in the house and called him up. He was very sorry, but he did not have an opening, but would keep me in mind should a vacancy occur. A little while later, just when I was beginning to despair, I was called to the phone and it was the Clerk saying that the man who was working for him had resigned, so would I call by the next morning to talk about the position. I was so happy I could hardly speak but some how I told him I would be there. How long that night was; I could not get to the courthouse fast enough when morning finally came. I walked into the Clerk's office 10 with the greatest dignity and a calmness I have never understood to this

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day. I got through the interview and walked out with the job. I reported for work on the 1st day of November 1917.

I remember my first assignment very vividly. It was to record a deed and in a big hurry for the owner was in town for only a short time.

He lived so far out in the country that he could not wait long for the paper and would not trust it to the mails, so he had to wait for it.

I have always had a sneaking suspicion that it was his first paper for record.

So there I was faced by an old model Elliott-Fisher book machine such as I had never seen in fact never even knew that such a contraption was manufactured. Since, I have decided it was the very first one made. My employer very kindly brought the large bound current deed record out of the vault and put it in the machine and started me off. There I was perched up on a high stool, my poor little stumpy arms reaching their full length and then some over to the keys up at the very tip top of the page. I was so excited I couldn't strike the right key looking at it, but somehow I finally finished that paper. At the end of the record I was instructed to write "Recorded November 1st 1917." Ever since, whenever I feel I am about to get the "big-head" over anything, I quietly go over to the Clerk's office and 11 get out that book, turn to the page and take one good look at that piece of work. I come out, almost on tiptoe greatly taken down and go on about my business knowing I haven't a thing in the world to be stuck-up about.

But with the next recording I was not so excited and did a better job. My work was satisfactory for I stayed on as recording clerk until 1923 when I resigned to take a position in a private office.

The 6 years of service in the Clerk's office meant much to me. I came in contact with many of the county people and made friends among both white and black. I liked the work and hated to leave. Those years at the courthouse covered two entirely different periods - the

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first of great prosperity, the last the hard days leading to financial ruin - the "depression" as it is known now. At one time during the days when money was easy, there were 4 banks in Washington and 3 in [Tigsall?], making 7 in Wilkes County. They all had a great deal of surplus currency.

I have had over [500?] papers on my desk at one time for record, mostly bills of sale from these banks. For weeks I worked from early morning to late afternoon, never catching up with the papers that streamed in faster than I could put them on record.

A practically unknown person with almost no financial standing could get \$50.00 from a bank or an individual, by putting up a hog or two or a bony old cow, that died long 12 before the paper was due, as collateral.

Everyone was buying automobiles on paper. Why, I even went so far as to try out a car and figure on buying it, but my more sensible Mother said "No" so emphatically that I know I had better not go against her, as we were among the very few who walked in little old Washington-Wilkes where almost every known make of automobile was on sale in those palmy days. The nearest I ever came to owning one was to buy the Kodak that was included in the equipment of one of the highest priced ones as the buyer already owned a Kodak.

Land prices were soaring at this time. Men who had heretofore acted with wonderful business judgment seemed to throw all discretion to the wind and bought ordinary Wilkes County land at enormous prices. Some made down payments of cash for as much as the land was worth mortgaging the place for the balance. Others mortgaged good homes and land for money to buy high priced farms. I recorded all those papers. Later, when prices began to drop, suits were filed for huge unpaid amounts then in due process of law. I recorded judgment against these good people, and the sheriff's deeds to their lands. I have seen on public sale days, strong men stand with tears in their eyes and with

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quivering lips as they heard the sheriff's "All bids in - blank Hundred Dollars, once; blank hundred dollars, twice; blank hundred dollars three times, sold to Mr.

So-and-so for Blank Hundred Dollars."

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This price in most instances being about 1/10 of what it had sold for a few years before.

As I saw so many victims of the crash following the prosperous years of 1918-19-20 - I thought I sympathized with them feeling that we were fortunate indeed. Mother had 100 acres of as good land as there was in the county and a nice bank account. I had two Liberty bonds and a savings account besides a job with a sure salary. Hard times were something behind us - we had gone through all we would ever have. Then too, all these people who were having such trying times now were poor managers, that was all - poor managers. Better believe I could manage better than that, I'd never lose what I had, no sir, not I! Well - let's see.

During these prosperous times I have been talking about, my Uncle Ben refused \$40.00 cash per acre for his 190 acre farm. And he had sold the timber on about 200 acres of the home place for \$9,500.00 cash. Out of this amount Mother received her one-fourth share.

I accepted a position with a prominent insurance agent, on July 1st 1923. He had observed my work and offered me the place at a considerable raise over what I was getting, with the promise of promotion as I earned it. My poor back was well-nigh broken with the lifting of heavy books in the Clerk's office, and too, I was constantly reminded that there was no future to the job. I tried for a raise time after time, but always met with the same story - "paying as much as I can", when the truth is I was by my own work, making more than my salary in 3 to 5 days every month, not counting costs of suits, cancellations, salary during court and much else that did not come to my desk, and I was the only help in the office.

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I was delighted with my new work from the first and received a raise in a few months. In October after I changed positions, my bachelor uncle, failing in health, wanted to come live with us. We lived in an apartment without a spare bedroom. So he fixed himself up a nice room in the garage that had been used a short while/ before as a home by the family while they were building the house. He had been with us only a few weeks when he was taken seriously ill.

On the following Thanksgiving eve, my mother went to bed feeling a little tired, but as well as usual. The next morning she was too sick to get up and the doctor said she was very ill; he feared pneumonia. This dread malady did develop and for days three doctors and two nurses did all that was known to medical science, but at one time it seemed of no avail. One morning they all gave up hope and said that the end was only a few hours off. However, they did not stop their brave struggle to win against the enemy. After an hour or two there was a slight change for the better - the crisis was past and then started the long tedious period of convalescence. In May of 15 the next year she was pronounced well enough to be dismissed by the doctor and was allowed to dress for the first time since her illness.

For two or three months I had to be at home for my uncle grew so much worse that we did not expect him to live - in fact I had given up hope of my mother and uncle - it seemed they were going together. But all this time my employer kept my place for me, but of course, I lost the pay for all the time I was out. When mother got better and all expenses were paid, the family savings had about reached bottom again - timber money and all.

In July of that year my uncle died. His will was read and to my surprise he had left me his little 190 acre farm and my mother a big portion of his estate. This all did not amount to so very much after his last expenses were met and the inheritance tax, ordinary's and attorney's fees were paid. Mother straightened up all affairs and opened a savings account in the Exchange Bank, the oldest bank here and the one we had always used.

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How proud I was over owning a farm - a plantation all my very own. Immediately I had dreams of a fortune made farming, and sat about to make those dreams come true. Right away, as though to spur me on, a local lumberman wanted a small tract of timber. I sold it for \$600.00, that was just the pines, not the land. This money I took and invested in fixing up the houses on the place, buying farming equipment and hiring a farmer. An old Negro man and his wife whom he called "Pig" were highly recommended to me, but the man he lived with wouldn't let him go until he finished paying him a debt, the balance being \$35.00. Oh, yes, I would pay it gladly, so the check was given him and all arrangements made. Why the first time my tenant came driving my mules to my wagon, I felt like a millionaire! At last, I was farming, and I could hardly wait until fall when I would have many bales of cotton to sell!

Everything went well all spring - for the Negroes and the mules. The first of every month I wrote a check for their rations for 30 days, besides incidentals. Then came the summer - still everything was going along nicely on the farm for all, except me, including the boll-weevils which had moved in on my cotton fields.

At last the long looked for fall came. With corn, cotton, peas, potatoes - all to be gathered in, and I, the newest farmer, was to have 1/2 of all that was grown on my 190 broad acres. I could hardly wait.

One day, Lee Slakey, the negro farmer, came to the office with the gin certificates for all the cotton grown on my place that year - 2 bales weighing less than 500 each! From them had to come pay for the fertilizer bill, the year's run, and the price/ of cotton almost negligible.

I settled up as best I could, but instead of the dreams of a fortune made on a farm, I had nightmares of acres and acres of cotton with all the people I owed standing in the middle of them.

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The Negroes pleaded with me to let them stay on, just let them try one more year, they would “deem everything” and make some money - “Yassum, some big money.” So disobeying one of those hunches that an astrologer told/ me always to heed, I agreed to let them stay.

Winter came on and I received news of the death at one of my mules. I was trying to decide whether to get a one-horse wagon and plow, and do the best I could with half of what we had the year before, or to buy another mule and try it all over again in a big way. Before I could decide this all important question, someone came asking that I send the doctor for Lee, my farmer. I went out with the physician who is a kinsman of mine. When he came out to go home he said the man's illness was critical and he did not think he could recover. He died in a day or so, I did have sense enough to see that he kept up his insurance so there was enough from that to pay the doctor and the burial expenses.

I had bought hogs and chickens and they were to be raised on halves. When poor Lee died and his widow “Pig” was moving away, I sent down for my half of the pigs and chickens. Oh, no, there wasn't a one for me, my pigs died and the hawks done catch eb'ry las' one oo' your chickens, Miss Minnie.” Of course they expected me to believe it - and 18 I guess I was so confused over the sudden turn of events I must have looked simple enough to make them think I really did.

All of this seems bad enough, but there is more. While I was trying to work out some way to get my farming venture out of the red and see about starting over, news came that fire had destroyed the house on my place. For several years I had carried insurance on it - good insurance for it was a very nice house, old but well built. Soon after I had sold my cotton and found how very much I lacked of meeting expenses, I had let the insurance expire - so the house just up and burned from sparks from a forest fire that went over the place destroying much timber in its path. It went on across to Mother's place too but spared her houses.

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With this last blow, like the drinking man who was several times thrown out of a party he had gone to uninvited, I picked myself up with the conclusion that fate did not want me to farm, so I just wasn't going to do it. I gathered up what was left, sold all equipment and then had to mortgage the place to help pay the debts made in the grand failure.

At the same time while I was doing all of this, Mother was doing the same thing only on a bigger scale on her adjoining place. She didn't lose any mules, hands or houses, so it took her several years longer to be convinced that it was a losing proposition.

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About this time, came Washington's first bank failure. And of course it had to be the Exchange Bank, the one where our money was deposited.

After about ten years Mother got \$12.00 from the over \$300.00 she had there.

During all this time I was working at the Carrington Insurance Agency at a very nice salary. However, in 1928 things were very bad financially and my employer got behind with my salary. Times were so hard there was not another opening so I stayed on and kept up as best I could, ever hoping better times would come. "Prosperity was around the corner" in those days, so said everybody.

In 1929, the friend who owned the house we lived in had a splendid opportunity to sell it. He gave us the refusal but it was a larger house than we needed and much more expensive than we could afford after our big losses. We had always wanted a little home, so we bought the small lot next to where we lived and started a home on the unit plan - building only a small portion of what we hope to have some day.

Before starting on our house I had a talk with Mr. Carrington and as assured me that he would have money in hand to pay all he owed me and that my salary would go right on. He then told me glowing stories of his prospects, and I foolishly believed it all. We went ahead and built our house and then everything went to pieces. The bills were 20 due and

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we paid out as far as we could. There was no money to go any farther, Mr. Carrington had failed in his contract and I could not collect anything. Creditors were urging payment and the plumbing man was most especially insistent and ugly. One material man was hard up himself, and through his attorney made things very difficult. He, however, owned an immense plantation down near ours, so as he thought well of my little place, he suggested taking a second mortgage on it. I gladly did this feeling very safe for then neither of them could foreclose without paying the other. With a note signed by both Mother and myself, we satisfied the other material man.

In the office things went from bad to worse. Mr. Carrington had failed completely. He suggested that I take over his recording fire business as part payment on what he owed me and that/ he would pay me \$10.00 per week to stay on to do his life insurance office work.

This I agreed to do - having no other place to go.

His fire insurance business was scattered over several counties and most of it was very undesirable - but I was like a sinking person, I grabbed at anything. I thought I could weed out the bad risks and gradually build up a good business. This I started out to do, but I did not reckon/ on the town's keen fire insurance competition.

Before I could make any headway there were fires one 21 after another bringing terrific losses to the companies I represented. Then to cap the climax, Mr. Carrington forged my name to some policies, collected the premiums and spent them. He collected some others and used the money, leaving me liable to the Company. I had to take legal steps to stop him, but it was too late to save me from financial embarrassment such as I had never thought possible.

About this time I was a physical and financial wreck I could neither eat nor sleep from worry and dread. I had an indebtedness of something like \$1,700.00 or more with nothing

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to meet it and living expenses going on at home for my mother and me. Besides the \$500.00 that Mr.

Carrington had collected in premiums and used, and for which I was responsible to the fire insurance companies, he owed me over \$700.00 in back salary. I appealed to his brother in Atlanta, a very prominent merchant there. He promised to aid me in every way saying that he would see that his brother paid me and that if he didn't that he would see that I did not lose a penny if I would just let him manage it. Since he was a big churchman, an official in the Presbyterian denomination and a great Billy Sunday Evangelistic Club member and worker, I believed him.

In fact the first time I ever saw him was some years before when he came here with some members of the Atlanta Billy Sunday Club to hold services in this little country town. He spoke in the morning at our 22 Methodist Church and in the evening at the Baptist. I was not working for his brother at the time but I heard him and thought what a Christian gentleman he was. Little did I think that some day I would have a perfectly good opportunity to find out for myself. What a lot of difference there is between saying and doing.

Well one day a friend who had a dental office next to the Carrington set-up came in and offered me room in his office. I accepted, borrowed a desk, an old broken down typewriter and brought a chair from home. I had nothing to move across the hall but some insurance blanks and forms.

But that move proved to be the most fortunate one I ever made, and now that I look back on it, I feel sure that it was a kind Providence who directed it.

In 1933 I applied for work in the office of our Government County Administrator here. I was called in every few days for several hours work which helped immensely. Later as the work expanded I was given more work until a family connection of the Administrator was taken in, then I was transferred to the re-employment office for part time work. This I

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had for sometime, owing the money to meet our obligations and only taking a little out for living expenses. Then came notice that this office would be closed so I registered for work the last thing I did before leaving. I registered for general office work, typist and historical research.

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Right away I applied to the Administrator for work. She did not give me anything nor even encourage me, although my application showed how very much I was in need of work. In the meantime there was a shakeup in the administration here and a young man was sent to replace the county administrator. I went to see him and laid my case before him. My mother had never fully recovered from her lung illness and was unable to do anything so the entire financial burden was on me.

After waiting as patiently as prevailing conditions allowed for a reasonable length of time, I borrowed the money and went to Atlanta to put my case before someone in the State Office. Miss Shepperson was not in the city so I was interviewed by Miss Jane Van de Vrede. When I finished my story, I asked: "Is there a place in the program for me?"

She replied kindly and emphatically, "There certainly is you will be put to work at once."

She wrote the local office to that effect and very soon I was indexing the oldest records in the Clerk's office. That project expired about the time Federal Writer's was started and greatly to my surprise and delight I was given a job on that project, which I have retained until the present time and I am still liking it more and more.

In 1935 my former employer passed away without paying me. His brother, when time came to make good his promises failed on same slight pretext. Which goes to show, as the old Negro 24 preacher said: "You sho' can't believe every thing folks promises you."

Being so deeply involved, I could not pay but in a very long time, if ever, and a dear friend stepped in and took charge of our affairs in 1935. He sold all of our land at \$3.00 per acre,

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paid up as far as it would go and helped us get the tangled strands of our financial affairs in better order. We had been unable to pay State and County taxes for 5 years - they amounted to nearly \$400.00.

All of this happened over a very short period of time but I feel like I lived a lifetime. My mother is frail and I could never let her know how bad our condition really was. She would ask me to bring groceries home when needed and many a time I would not have the money so would conveniently "forget" them. I remember once she told me among other things to bring some coffee that day. I hadn't the price so I "forgot"

it thinking surely the next day I would got the money. I didn't get it, nor the next and so on for several days. We had to drink tea, it was in the winter time, and neither of us liked it. Finally Mother said: "I'll declare, your memory is getting as bad as mine and if you don't think of what coffee today, I'm going up town and get it myself." I laughed with her over the "joke" she thought it was, but my heart sank fearing she would find the real reason why I had kept "forgetting" the needed groceries.

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Sometimes I was so panicky I almost collapsed when I heard the sheriff's voice in the building, I was so afraid some of my creditors were foreclosing and would put us out - every week I feared looking over the legal advertisements lest our land was listed among the tax sales.

My good friend, who took me in his office, and his wife have meant everything to me - he was always so jolly and helped me not to give up.

He gave me a desk and helped me buy a re-built typewriter. In exchange I helped him all I could. He was an elderly man partially retired, so that there was not much office work to do. He died last October but even in passing away he thought of me and provided an office for me/ for as long as I needed it.

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Sometimes when I think of the hard time and terrific strain I have had, and still am having for that matter, I am reminded of the lines from an old hymn: "Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come."

But I do not like to think back too much, for I am so thankful that I did not go down completely; that there were kind friends who stood by me, and that I live in a land under the administration of such a great humanitarian as our noble President, who feels for those who were caught in the terrible depression and lost almost all they had. Who in his wonderful kindness of heart has made it possible for us to have the high and rightful privilege of working out our financial difficulties and winning back our rightful places in the world, and still keep our self respect and our faith in God and man. And I can say with all the earnestness of my soul:

Thank God for America!

Thank God for Franklin D. Roosevelt, the president with a heart!